LAME BROILED JAN. 16, 2013

Some of U.K. Retailer Tesco's Hamburgers Are Actually 29 Percent Horsemeat

By Hugh Merwin

Not cool.

The British hypermarket chain Tesco has been selling a line of frozen hamburgers that are ostensibly made from beef, but many of those all-natural patties are actually part horse, and one recently tested sample was actually 29 percent horse meat, the *Telegraph* reports, citing an investigation conducted by the Food

Safety Authority of Ireland. In addition to burgers, meat pies and frozen lasagnas were tested, and most of these products were found to contain DNA from pigs.

So that's bad news, especially for Jews and Muslims: "More than a third (37 per cent) of the products tested in Ireland contained horse DNA,," the paper reports, "while the vast majority (85 per cent) also contained pig DNA." The Food Safety Authority of Ireland conducted the tests and determined that the mixed meat came from two processing plants in Ireland and one in the U.K.; all affected products that were sold through five retailers have been recalled.

The agency has clarified the terms of their investigation in an FAQ, available here for all you food-safety types, but the gist of it is that while careless processing and potential cross-contamination at the slaughterhouse may help explain the findings of the pig genome in 85 percent of the hamburgers tested, nothing quite explains all that horse DNA. While nine of ten burgers that were tested returned relatively low levels, the significant percentage of equine meat — one third — in that tenth burger is a mystery. "There is no clear explanation for the presence of horse DNA in products emanating from meat plants that do not use horse meat," says the chief executive of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. And while labeling a horse chuck patty as "beef" is illegal, the scientists who conducted the study indicate there is no immediate health risk for those who may have unwittingly eaten the suspect meat. It just sucks, that's all.

Tesco beef burgers found to contain 29% horse meat [Telegraph UK]

Food FYI: Horse meat found in burgers sold in Ireland, U.K. [LAT]

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